

**SEATTLE
OPERA.**



**DAS
RHEINGOLD**

AUGUST 12-20

SENSORY GUIDE



Runtime

Das Rheingold takes place in four scenes without an intermission. The first scene is approximately 25 minutes, the second scene is approximately 45 minutes, the third scene is approximately 30 minutes, and the fourth scene is approximately 50 minutes for a total run time of 2 hours and 30 minutes. *Das Rheingold* takes place without an intermission.

Environmental Considerations for *Das Rheingold*

1. McCaw Hall is an expansive, 2,900 seat auditorium. The sensory experience is very much affected by the seat chosen in the performance space. There are three main seating areas, orchestra, first tier and second tier. Generally, the orchestra section is closer to the stage and feels more open with the ceiling rising over 100 feet above the seats. The first tier starts approximately 85' feet from the stage. All seats in this section look down on the stage. The second tier starts approximately 120' from the stage. This section feels more sheltered as it is closest to the ceiling and farthest from the stage. Please see the sensory seating guide for more specific information.
2. There is a 85-piece orchestra with 48 stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello, double bass and harp), 20 brass (trumpet, trombone, horn and tuba), 14 woodwinds (flute, piccolo, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon), and 3 percussion (timpani and other percussion).
3. An English translation of the German lyrics is projected above the proscenium.
4. Throughout *Das Rheingold* moving images and animations are projected on two scrims that span the full breadth and height of the stage significantly increasing the visual intensity of the opera.

Performance Content Considerations for *Das Rheingold*

1. Each of the main characters in *Das Rheingold* has a distinct vocal type. This impacts the type of sound you will hear from the performer.
 - a. Wotan, dramatic baritone. Imposing, powerful, full and rich in tone. Middle range for males.
 - b. Fricka, dramatic mezzo. Rich, powerful and metallic in tone. Middle range for females.
 - c. Donner, dramatic baritone. Imposing, powerful, full and rich in tone. Middle range for males.
 - d. Froh, lyric tenor. Warm and flexible, soft in tone. Highest range for males.
 - e. Freia, dramatic soprano. Rich in tone, powerful and warm, emotive. Highest range for females.
 - f. Loge, dramatic tenor. Large, powerful and dark, full in tone. Highest range for males.
 - g. Alberich, dramatic baritone. Imposing, powerful, full and rich in tone. Middle range for males.
 - h. Mime, character tenor. Light quality with distinct vocal acting. Highest range for males.
 - i. Fasolt and Fafner, heavy bass. Rich, imposing, deep
 - j. Woglinde, and Wellgunde, dramatic sopranos. Rich in tone, powerful and warm, emotive. Highest range for females.
 - k. Flosshilde, mezzo-soprano. Rich and powerful. Middle range for females.
 - l. Erde, contralto. Warm, low and full in tone. Lowest range for females.
2. Volume ranges as heard from the front row of the orchestra level average around 75-80 dB and reach up to 95 dB briefly during moments with the full ensemble and orchestra at fortissimo. 70 dB is about the volume of a noisy restaurant. 80 dB is about the volume of a vacuum cleaner. 90 dB is

about the volume of a lawn mower. The dB scale does not take into account the timbre and resonance of a sound and is only one component of how pleasant or unpleasant one might experience a sound. Moments of music with an outstanding timbre or resonance are noted below. Those who are sensitive to loud, full sound may wish to wear noise dampening headphones.

Key to Symbols












Visual Intensity































Auditory Intensity





Emotional Intensity

Scene	Sensory Category	Description
SCENE I		
Prelude		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Images of slowly rippling blue light patterns symbolizing water are projected on the scrims - Stage fog fills the performance space. - Both continue through the entirety of Scene I
The Rhein Daughters and Alberich interact	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Rhein Daughters tease and taunt Alberich, luring him into the waters to drown. Alberich reacts angrily.
The Rheingold awakens	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rippling gold and green waves fill the scrims - The orchestra swells with full, bright sound
Alberich steals the gold	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Rhein Daughters are terrified as Alberich steals the gold and faint - Yellow and red jets of light stream down the scrim
Interlude	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The orchestra swells with full brass, string and tympani uptempo - Images of rapidly moving fog and shadows of machinery are projected on the scrims

SCENE II		
Wotan and Fricka argue		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wotan and Fricka argue over the deal he made with the giants to give them Freia in exchange for building his castle - Freia enters, begging for help from Fricka
Fasolt and Fafner come to claim Freia	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forte tympani and brass as Fasolt and Fafner enter - Their images are projected larger than life onto a scrim, enhanced with glowing effects - They argue with Wotan and demand Freia come with them
Donner and Froh come to save Freia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donner and Froh threaten the giants. Wotan demands they cease using force to save Freia.
Loge appears		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loge schemes against the giants. Froh and Donner threaten Loge. - Loge describes Alberich making a ring from the Rheingold - Freia cries out as the giants attempt to abscond with her
The Gods age	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gods age as the giants take Freia away from the castle - Images of gears fly across the rear scrim
Transformation	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Images on the scrim scroll upward giving the sensation of going underground - The orchestra sounds foreboding - There are repetitive, shrill anvil strikes as the Nibelings appear
SCENE III	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Throughout this scene Alberich wields a whip and cracks it multiple times - When Alberich dons the helmet, his voice is amplified
Mime's torture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While invisible from the helmet Alberich tortures Mime with the whip. The Nibelings scream.

Loge and Wotan enter Nibelheim	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The music swells with intensity as Mime tells his tale of torture - Alberich threatens the Nibelings and they scream as he wields the whip
Alberich changes form	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A bright red flashing image of a dragon is projected on the scrim and gold streams rain down
Transformation music	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anvils clang - The music crescendos - Images on the scrim scroll downward giving the sensation of rising to the Gods
SCENE IV		
Alberich delivers the gold	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The brass intensifies - Alberich and Wotan argue over the ring. Wotan tries to pry it from his hand. - At various times red lights flash and red streaks appear on the scrim
Fafner and Fasolt return		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Their images are projected larger than life onto a scrim, enhanced with glowing effects
Freia is covered in gold		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donner seethes with rage as Freia is covered in gold
Erda appears		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The upstage scrim is overed in glowing green branches - Green leaves are projected on both sides of the audience
Wotan tosses the ring to Fasolt	  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Red streaks appear on the scrim and on the images of the giants - Fafner kills Fasolt with a garrote - The tympani and brass sound ominous

Donner summons thunder		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Images of swirling clouds appear on the scrims giving the illusion of faster and faster rotation. It is dizzying. - There is an anvil and thunder strike and blue lightening flashes on the scrim
Froh builds the bridge to Valhalla		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rainbow light paths shimmer on the upstage scrim - The distant image on the upstage scrim grows, giving the appearance of the Gods moving towards Valhalla